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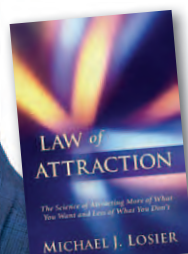
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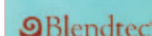
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The case for proportional representation Kinder, gentler democracies

by Sonia Furstenau

Let me start where I'm going to end: we have an extraordinary opportunity to make our electoral system better. But the debate around this referendum, particularly from the no side, has been mostly "messaging" about what you should fear.

I am more of a hope person myself, and an evidence person. So let's look at what research and evidence have to say.

Arend Lijphart, a world-renowned political scientist, spent his career studying various features of democratic life in first-past-the post (majoritarian) and pro rep democracies. (He calls the latter "consensual" democracies.) In his landmark study (2012), he compared 36 democracies over 55 years.

What did he conclude? Proportional representation democracies are "kinder, gentler democracies." He also notes that the majoritarian model of democracy is exclusive, competitive and adversarial, whereas the consensus model is characterized by inclusiveness, bargaining and compromise; for this reason, consensus democracy could also be termed "negotiation democracy."



We are seeing daily examples of how "power" as the driving force in a democracy is a distorting and damaging force. We need only look at what has unfolded in Ontario to see the truly distressing impacts the FPTP approach is creating.

Hold those images – kinder, gentler democracies, negotiation democracies – and we'll come back to Lijphart's and others' findings later. But first, I want to look back at a moment earlier this year. I want to look back specifically to May 31, the very last day of the spring session of the Legislature.

We were eagerly, enthusiastically, maybe even fervently anticipating our release from the House, our

returns to our families, our communities, our homes. But first, we were going to have one last debate about the referendum on proportional representation. The debate was opened by Andrew Wilkinson, leader of the official opposition, followed by Premier Horgan.

Then it was my turn.

As I have been saying for the better part of a year, I see electoral reform as a way for us to strengthen our democracy, to improve the culture of politics, to move us away from a system that rewards a party with 100% of the power with only 40% of the vote. More about that later.

I also made a plea.

I stated, "In this conversation, more than most, truth and honesty will be critical. No matter what side of the issue you fall on, whether you want to keep our existing first-past-the-post system or whether you favour updating our system to a form of proportional representation, we owe it to voters to base our arguments for and against in fact, not fiction. If we use fear and conspiracy theories to advance our case, we cheapen the discussion and risk lasting damage to voters' faith in our democratic institutions."

Looking at how the debate has played out over the summer, I fear that my plea did not resonate as deeply as I'd hoped it would. As I mentioned, the no side has focused on its "messaging," some of it rather questionable. But let's focus on fact.

All three proportional representation systems will deliver to every voter an MLA, just like today. Let me repeat that: all three proportional representation systems deliver local representation and provide voters the opportunity to vote for the individual candidates they want to support. Indeed, it's even better than that because constituents will have more than one representative in the Legislature.



Under MMP, each riding will have a local MLA elected – just like today. However, in addition to local MLAs, there will also be regional MLAs. The benefit of this is that you will have representation, just as you do now, from your local MLA, but you will also have representation from regional MLAs, meaning that people will be working collaboratively, and often across party lines, to represent you effectively.

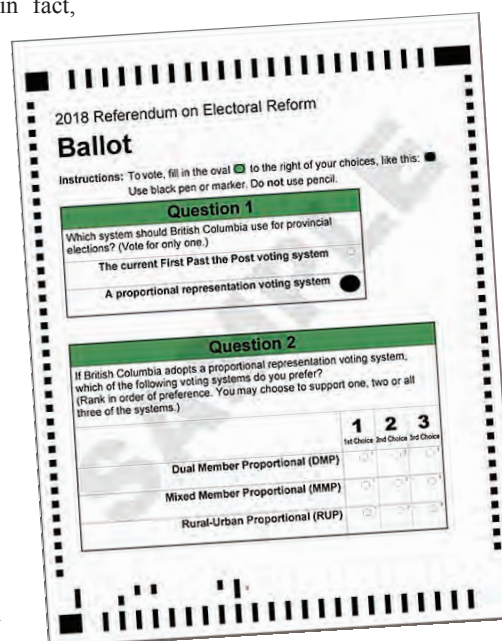
Under Dual Member, ridings would be paired, and would have two MLAs for each riding. Same number of MLAs in the House, but now there are two to represent each riding. Again, you have MLAs working together, and often across party lines, to best represent you.

Rural Urban would be a combination of MMP, with local and regional MLAs for rural ridings, and Single Transferable Vote, with ballots where you rank the candidates, and ultimately have a group of MLAs representing larger urban ridings. MLAs

that – you guessed it – would need to work collaboratively and across party lines to best represent their constituents.

What if you don't like the job that one of those MLAs has done? Same as today

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2018 civic election: to change or not to change

by Elizabeth Murphy

The 2018 civic election has an opportunity for change, with most incumbents not running again. The question is: will the new council lead a new course in direction or just be more of the same? There is hope for the former.

The current Vision dominated council is ending its decade in power with a dismal record. But this election could mean a new direction if people become informed and vote.

The initial good intentions of Vision were undermined from the first term they controlled council in 2008. Big campaign donations from both unions and developers were how these influences set us on an unsustainable path. Vancouver now has record homelessness, an affordability crisis, unsustainable demolition of older more affordable buildings, replaced by

more expensive luxury units for the global market that most people who live here cannot afford.

The city has been reversing decades of practice for community participatory planning that Vancouver used to be highly regarded for. Now the institutional memory is being lost as the experienced staff are hollowed out. No longer are citizens consulted as citywide rezonings are imposed that makes the character of each neighbourhood dissolve into banality with locals displaced and priced out.

Vision's majority council are responsible for the last decade. Although only one of the current Vision council is running this election and "apparently" no mayor, they are still working to get a majority to continue this abysmal record of destruction. So called "independent" mayoralty candidates such as Kennedy *continued p.13...*

...*Proportional representation* from pg. 3

– don't vote for him or her in the next election. That's pretty straightforward accountability.

All three systems deliver MLAs you choose and you can turn to – just like today.

All three systems deliver local, accountable representatives chosen by the voters. All deliver proportionality. None would result in a significant increase to the number of MLAs in the House (a maximum of eight). All three would have simple ballots.

And by voting yes for proportional representation, we choose to join over 90 democracies around the world that have proportional systems, including 85% of OECD countries.

What none of the three systems delivers is 100% of power to one party based on 40% of the vote. And this outcome, so consistent, is becoming an increasingly serious threat to democracy.

We are seeing daily examples of how “power” as the driving force in a democracy is a distorting and damaging force. We need look only to what has unfolded in Ontario to see the truly distressing impacts the approach is creating.

The Progressive Conservatives got 40.49% of the vote in the election in June. And 58% of eligible voters cast ballots. Which means that just under 23.5% of eligible voters in Ontario voted for the party that currently has a majority of seats in the Ontario legislature.

Fewer than one in four eligible voters delivered

100% of power to Doug Ford. And after the election, an advisor to Ford's campaign team told the *National Post* that to win the election, the campaign relied on “literally thousands” of online ads, targeting specific geographic and demographic groups. Apparently, the targeting was so precise, “a husband and wife should not have seen the same ads.”

This is an approach described in Susan Delacourt's 2013 book, *Shopping for Votes*. Parties have learned that rather than focusing on an overarching vision and platform, it's more effective, under first-past-the-post, to identify what specific demographics of voters want and promise to deliver that to them.

Democracy has increasingly become a game of political parties figuring out how to woo small pockets of potential voters based on tapping into self-interest and less and less about parties and politicians putting forward a coherent vision for the future that works to forge consensus. Election campaigns are not bringing us together; they are sowing seeds of disunity and fragmentation.

And so while Doug Ford never produced a costed platform or a unifying vision to the voters of Ontario, he did promise a buck a beer, cheaper gas and tax cuts.

And here we are, three months into Ford as Premier, and he has done what no premier of Ontario has ever done; he has chosen to invoke the notwithstanding clause of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Ford's choice to invoke the notwithstanding clause, to order Ontario MPPs back to the Legislature, to force

another piece of legislation through, which he can do because one in four eligible voters delivered to him a majority of seats and 100% of power, is a gobsmacking rejection of the foundations of our democracy in Canada.

This is not the only questionable step Ford has taken since his election in June. He cancelled the Basic Income Pilot underway in Ontario, an approach that economists around the world are recognizing as a necessary step in our world of growing automation and inequality.

He stripped sex ed curriculum back to the 1990s. He scrapped the cap and trade program and the Green Ontario Fund, which resulted in a \$100 million loss of funding for school repairs across Ontario. He froze public sector hiring.

It's not that there may well be issues with some of the programs and funding; it's the unilateral, non-evidence approach to cancelling programs that is worrying.

A democracy – all democracies – must have built into them checks on power.

Democracies are meant to disperse power across different bodies so that no single body or individual can act unilaterally. The judiciary is a check on the power of the government executive.

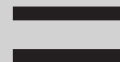
To reject that check on power is to erode our democracy. Ford is choosing instead to insist that he does have all the power and that nobody should be allowed to question that power.

This is not the Canada I grew up in, *continued p.6...*

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*Reference: Anti-Influenza virus activities of commercial oregano oils and their carriers. *Journal of Applied Pharmaceutical Science* 2012; 02(07) 214-18.

...*Proportional representation* from pg. 5

not the democracy my father taught me to be fiercely proud of and fiercely protective of.

What are we at risk of losing as our democratic institutions are treated with such contempt by those who should in fact be protecting them? Far too much. More than I think we want to imagine.

What I fear is that our politics, driven by our electoral system, driven by “vote shopping,” driven by an increasing tendency towards populism, driven by the efforts to win swing votes in swing ridings, is becoming increasingly devoid of the kind of leadership we desperately need right now.

Leadership that lifts us up, that encourages us to look at our world and ask, “How do we make this better?” We are losing the type of leadership that holds itself to a higher standard, that recognizes the true burden of elected office, which is that we must put service to our constituents, our province, to people, first. We are losing the type of leadership that inspires all of us to want to be in service to something greater than ourselves. We are, perhaps most importantly, losing the type of leadership that brings us together, that encourages us to celebrate our differences while recognizing our shared humanity, the kind of leadership that roots us in compassion, kindness, and empathy.

I have been reflecting on these questions for a very long time. This is a letter I wrote in the midst of the 2000 federal election campaign. It was published in the *Globe and Mail*:

“Coverage of the federal election has compelled me to stop writing my thesis on medieval theology and tear myself away from the 12th century long enough to state the reasons why I will not vote for Stockwell Day and the Alliance Party.

“As a historian, I think about how Mr. Day and his policies will appear when people look back at our time. I believe he will be seen as a divisive force, since he neatly divides society into ‘us’ and ‘them,’ and, like any good ideologue, he defines these two categories in opposition to each other. ‘We’ are the citizens, ‘they’ are the criminals; we are the hard-working, they are the lazy poor; we are the righteous, they are the deviant; we are the threatened, they are the feared.

“Historically, Mr. Day will be recognized as a politician who was willing to capitalize on the fears and insecurities that are inherent in a world view that sets people in opposition to each other. What Mr. Day and the Alliance fail to acknowledge is that there are no neat divisions, no simple ways to categorize human beings, and that in the future, societies will be judged as enlightened according to the degree to which they recognize what unifies us as humans, rather than what divides us.”

As Doug Ford rages against a judge’s decision, as Donald Trump rages against, well, pretty much everything, I think my fears about where Stockwell Day’s tendencies could take us were not misplaced.

When our so called leaders are so deeply self-focused, so petty, so willing to be their worst selves, where do we find the inspiration to be our best, to see ourselves as part of a greater whole, to work towards a shared vision that will benefit the many, rather than just the few?

I am increasingly anxious about the path we seem to be on, which makes me increasingly determined to do all that I can to help us choose a better one.

Back to the research on democracies. What else can we learn from Lijphart’s research, which you can read in his book *Patterns of Democracy*, and others who have studied democracies?

Countries using proportional systems enact policies that reflect the view of the majority. Citizens are more satisfied with their democracies even when their preferred party is not in power. More women and more indigenous peoples are elected to office. Elected officials are more responsive to the electorate. Youth voter turnout is higher. Citizens have higher levels of political knowledge.

Under proportional representation, there are far fewer



By voting yes for proportional representation, we choose to join over 90 democracies around the world that have proportional systems, including 85% of OECD countries.

policy lurches where successive governments spend time and money undoing the policies of the previous government.

Instead of the focus that we see too often under first-past-the-post on short-term and wedge issues, pro rep governments are better long-term managers. Proportional governments tend to have higher surpluses and lower levels of debt than first-past-the-post governments. They have lower levels of income inequality.

The list goes on. Pro rep countries score better on transparency, have lower levels of corruption. And it’s pro rep countries that are doing the best on environmental protection and action on climate change while in first-past-the-post America and Ontario, steps that had been taken on these fronts are being undone by the current administrations.

Yes, there are challenges, but the compiled data and evidence paint a very compelling picture and support the argument that societies, and democracies, generally fare much better under proportional representation. What the no side is not talking about are the countries that operate under FPTP: USA, UK, and Canada, but also, for example, Venezuela, Gambia and Myanmar.

We need true leadership now and we need an electoral system that creates a “kinder, gentler democracy.” We are not going to solve the extraordinary challenges we are facing in a winner-take-all system that does not encourage the best in all of us.

In BC, the fires that produced weeks of smoke that blotted out our skies, scratched our throats, made our lungs hurt and our hearts ache are not “natural” or

inevitable, but without serious and significant efforts to change forest management practices, they are likely to get worse. Last week, as hurricane Florence pummelled the Carolinas, there were more giant storms on our planet than ever recorded.

James Hansen wrote *Storms of my Grandchildren*, a book informed by his years as a climate scientist at NASA. The storms are here and we need the political will to recognize it’s long past time to [acknowledge] that the disruptions created by climate change are not going to lessen without concerted efforts from all governments.

Gwynne Dyer wrote the book *Climate Wars*, in which he recognized the increasing [stress] nations would feel as pressures mounted from migration, due to swathes of the planet becoming uninhabitable [because of] climate change. Rather than stoking fear, we need leaders to be working collaboratively and globally to find solutions to these mounting challenges, not using them as political fodder to win swing ridings.

I have just started to read Gwynne Dyer’s latest book on the future of democracy, called *Growing Pains*. His premise: inequality and automation are the greatest threats to social and political stability and we’re going to need to embrace solutions to these growing challenges if we hope to see democracy survive.

On the way home from Union of BC Municipalities a few weeks ago, we were in line for the buffet. Ahead of us was a couple with their one-year-old baby, Benedict, held in the arms of his tall father. He was bright eyed, alert and playful. We played a bit of peek-a-boo, which, at one point, elicited a deep laugh that enveloped his entire body.

Then he reached out his hand, one finger extended. I slowly reached out mine, and after our fingertips touched he seized my entire finger. And he wouldn’t let go. As his dad moved forward with the line, so did I, connected to Benedict.

His gesture was one of trust, one that comes from our fundamental instinct and need as humans to connect. And as I stood there, my finger in Benedict’s tiny fist, I thought about this speech, and what I wanted to convey. Benedict, the baby, has no idea the challenges we face in the world today, but we do. And it’s up to us to make it the best world we can for him and for each child who depends on us to make the best choices for them and their futures.

And one big step we can take for Benedict is to move to a “kinder, gentler democracy” so that he and all children can have the hope of growing up in a kinder, gentler world.

Let’s seize this extraordinary opportunity we have in front of us to build a kinder, gentler democracy. Let’s do everything we can to bring proportional representation to BC. 📌



Sonia Furstenau was elected to the Legislative Assembly of BC in the 2017 provincial election. She represents the district of Cowichan Valley as a member of the Green Party of British Columbia caucus.

Proportional representation

an historic opportunity to improve democracy in BC

by Eoin Finn

I grew up in Ireland, which has used a system of proportional representation (ProRep) since it became a Republic almost 100 years ago. I have voted in several elections there and still have the right to vote in elections to the Irish Senate, though I haven't lived there for 50 years.

It is not well known that Britain strongly influenced Ireland's choice of ProRep, fearing that Ireland's Protestant minority would be denied repre-

sentation in an Irish parliament elected under a first-past-the-post ("FPTP") voting scheme. It worked; Ireland's first elected president was a Protestant and the principle of proportional representation is generally accepted in all of Ireland as one that delivers fair results. British Columbians will soon be voting on changing how its provincial politicians are elected. For fans of representative democracy – the Provincial NDP and Green parties, most social, religious and labour organizations and NGOs – this change is long overdue. Opponents include establishment figures and the BC Liberal Party, though its last two leaders, Premiers Campbell and Clark, both advocated for the change to ProRep.

The problem is obvious; our current FPTP vot-

ing system is a hangover of our colonial past. FPTP distorts election outcomes, regularly granting more than half the legislature seats, and consequently 100% of the power, to whichever party secures about 40% of the popular vote. Achieving total power for a term of four years with less than 50% of the vote is called a "false majority." BC has had a lot of these. In the past 50 years, only one government – Gordon Campbell's in 2001 – got more than 50% of the votes.

This has the undesirable outcome of having governments assume power even though 60% of the electorate didn't vote for them. FPTP causes smaller parties to be seriously under-represented. For example, the Greens got 17% of the vote in BC's 2017 election, but won less than four percent (3) of the 87 seats, denying those views in the formulation of government policies. That is surely an affront to our most deeply held notions of fairness.

Proportional representation (ProRep), in which the percent of the vote for a party secures that party roughly the same percent of the seats and share of power, has become the favoured voting scheme in most of the world's democra- *continued p.9...*



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by Trevor Crean

My name is Trevor Crean; my father and I are third and fourth-generation funeral directors. In 1908, my great-grandfather bought a funeral home in Vancouver. Since then our profession has experienced many changes, in this city and across the country. To be succinct, death has become big business. Many of the family funeral homes faced two choices: a generation succeeded the previous or they sold to consolidators.

When my father was born in the 1950s, there were 14 family-funeral homes in the City of Vancouver (proper) and a grave cost \$50. Today, only one real family-funeral home remains and graves cost \$23,000 and higher. Financial means now often takes precedence over adherence to beliefs. In Metro Vancouver, where the cremation rate hovers steadily around 80%, it is not

uncommon that families forgo the cemetery experience, choosing to scatter cremated remains or keep them at home. The perception is that it saves cost and Grandpas often say, “Just cremate me and scatter me off the back of a boat.” While that is fine for Grandpa, some families struggle later when grandchildren wish to pay respects or visit his resting place and the response is a shrug along with, “Well, he’s somewhere between Bowen Island and Victoria.” With no solution readily apparent, my father and I began looking for a way to provide affordable and sustainable burial space.

In 2016, Dad sold his half of the funeral business to his brother and we set out to build a cemetery. Today, we are proud to announce we’ve opened Heritage Gardens – a sustainable and environmentally-conscious

cemetery in South Surrey. With the urban landscape regularly swallowing history, we believe cemeteries can play a larger role in healthy communities. They are places of identity, remembrance and respect.

We want to reconnect society with cemeteries by focussing on the positive: the deceased are not just your family; they built our communities and they’re part of the fabric. These are the folks we tell stories and write books about. Heritage Gardens can create neighbourhoods to capture and preserve the history of organizations, such as labour, faith groups and service clubs. People benefit from having a focal point where they can stop and reflect. Take, for example, the world’s fascination with social media. In essence, *continued p.11...*



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...ProRep from pg. 7

cies and major economies. Of the OECD's 36 members – the club of more developed countries Canada likes to consider its peers – 86% (31) of them use some form of ProRep. The constituent countries of the UK – Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales – have each opted for ProRep for electing their devolved Assemblies. The prestigious Economist Intel-



It is telling that no country that has switched from FPTP to ProRep has ever voted to switch back though several have held such referenda. BC's legislation has the requirement that, should ProRep be approved this fall, BC will get to vote on keeping ProRep or changing back to FPTP two elections hence.

ligence Unit (EIU) reports that, of the 19 countries EIU rates as "full democracies," 16 of them use some form of ProRep. Interestingly, EIU recently demoted the US, which uses FPTP, to the ranks of "flawed democracies."


Federally, FPTP does no better. Trudeau's Liberals got 39.5% of the 2015 Federal vote, but netted 55% of the seats and 100% of the power. Harper's 2011 Conservatives netted 39.6% of voters, got 54% of the seats and – yet again – all the power. In both cases, 60% of the votes didn't vote for the winner, elected nobody

and were discarded. Once elected in 2015, the Federal Liberals reneged on their election promise to change Canada's voting system.

ProRep legislatures have significant benefits for their voters. They are generally kinder, gentler, more progressive parliaments where politicians must co-operate to 'get stuff done.' They elect more women and minority members. They attract legislators who are of a co-operative, rather than combative, mind-set. They are, at least, equally stable and long-lasting as their FPTP counterparts. They resist incorporating extremist parties and views in government. But they do not exclude them. Instead, they afford them parliamentary representation if they garner more than the threshold rate, typically set at five percent of voters, for the formula to achieve a proportional result. They suffer far fewer of the "policy lurches" that bedevil FPTP where changes of government mean the reversal of taxation, regulatory and social policies and priorities of the past government.

Such left-right ("army politics") lurches create great uncertainties for BC businesses, educators, health care workers and social service organizations. They are also a great waste of both time and the public's money.

It is telling that no country that has switched from FPTP to ProRep has ever voted to switch back though several have held such referenda. BC's legislation has the requirement that, should ProRep be approved this fall, BC will get to vote on keeping ProRep or changing back to FPTP two elections hence.

The ProRep referendum is a historic opportunity to modernize our voting system and improve the functioning of our democracy. All evidence suggests we take it. Consider this when you cast your vote in November's mail-in ballot. 

For information on the referendum and the ProRep options, visit these websites:

ElectionsBC: elections.bc.ca/referendum

VotePRBC: voteprbc.ca/get-informed/

ProRep Fact Checker: prorerefactcheck.ca

Eoin Finn B.Sc., Ph.D., MBA is a 40-year resident of BC and a retired partner of a major accounting/management consulting firm.

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From Beyond Despair

Testimonial from the book *Tesla Metamorphosis – Heal and Evolve* by Anya Petrovic



Anya Petrovic

I was desperately searching the Internet trying to find a way to beat systemic lupus which I had suffered for seventeen years already. In addition to this, the herpes virus was triggered in my body. I had open wounds on my face and my hands. I had found myself in a vicious circle with not much chance to escape.

Systemic lupus is a disease where the organism attacks itself, as the immune system is hyperactive. Medicine still does not have a treatment that would cure this disease. Corticosteroid therapy just helps maintain the status quo in the short term. Herpes was rampaging inside me, waking me up with severe pain in my lungs and shoulders each morning. The lupus was raging, triggered by the herpes. Every two weeks I had bladder infection, which was an announcement of an imminent attack on the kidneys. It wouldn't be enough to say that I was beyond despair.

I still didn't lose hope. Somehow, somewhere ... must be something or someone who can help me: a shaman from Siberia, a

medicine-man from America, an avatar from India, a fern from Amazon, mushrooms from Indonesia, something ... someone ... somewhere.

And then it happened! In my desperate search on the Internet, I came across Tesla Metamorphosis website. It gave me some hope, but then I realised with deep disappointment that Anya lives in Australia, and me, "just around the corner", in Europe. I pressed the Seminars Schedule button, and there was the light at the end of the tunnel: Anya was coming to Belgrade in two months. I could not believe ... I just could not believe it.

At times, I began to doubt if this all made any sense at all. Then I thought, does it matter if I believe it or not? If it works, it works. I was waiting for that woman I didn't know. With the first cold autumn days my immune system crashed, and I was nailed to my bed with a fever and a severe cough. "I am finished", I thought, "I will die before Anya arrives".

I did not die. On that gloomy November evening, I managed to get to my door and open it for Anya. I was overwhelmed by fragrance. "Isn't it written on the website that practitioners are not supposed to wear perfumes?" I asked myself. "Well, even if she does wear it, why so much? ... Tough, the smell is nice; something like a combination of marigold and pine, something like Indian incense."

The session started. I didn't believe in the stories about involuntary movements during the session, so I was pretty shocked when my left leg lifted and started rotating. It was as if somebody else was rotating it. Anya came because of my lupus, there was no chance that she could know about the problem with my left ankle and foot! At one stage, I felt as if I was sinking into the bed and as if something was happening with my spine.

My spine had been compressed in the sacral area for years. There was a bump there, and long ago I gave up any hope that the spine could be straightened. I was not paying attention to this anymore. Two days after the session, after having a shower, I saw myself in the mirror. My spine was perfectly straight! There was no way Anya could have known about my spine!

When the session was finished, Anya asked me what I had experienced during the session. I told her about the perfume she was wearing. I couldn't resist. I thought: "Gosh, how could I possibly not sense it, she was literally soaked in perfume?!" I was shocked when she told me that she didn't wear any!

For the second session, I went to Anya's place, as I was already able to get out of the house and take a bus. That night, when I returned home, I suddenly started crying. I was perfectly calm, but tears were streaming, and I could not control it. I couldn't cry for years before that.

In the third session I had a strange feeling that somebody was doing something on my body, something I could perhaps call "electronic healing".

I really do not know how to describe this. Like, for a while, I felt that I existed only in the area of my head and the area from my knees down. The part of my body in between those two points seemed transformed into a movement of energy, but not there. Somewhere else, I don't know ... in some other dimension.

Now, my blood-tests are perfect. The only thing I don't like about all this is that my menstrual cycle, which from puberty had always run a longer-than-average cycle, was now infallibly accurate ...

Olga Vingor

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With the urban landscape regularly swallowing history, we believe cemeteries can play a larger role in healthy communities. They are places of identity, remembrance and respect.

It is people establishing significance. Whether it's about feelings, family or events, we are driven to share and discuss our experiences because when people respond, it makes the subject significant. A family name carved into stone can go a long way; after all, what is more significant than a life lived?

Heritage Gardens reflects the values of

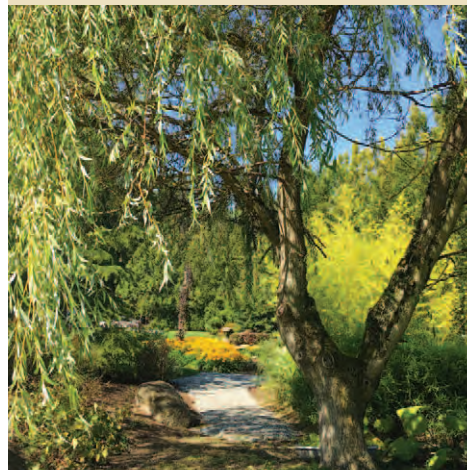
the families we've spoken to. People want natural and sustainable options. By using the space effectively, we can bury two caskets and up to eight urns in one plot; that's 10 family members. We also give families the option of whether they use a grave vault or not, meaning they can observe green burial practices in their plot. At our recent open house, we polled visitors about whether they preferred the grounds herbicided and manicured, like a traditional lawn, or to let weeds and flowers grow to give pollinating insects a foothold. The response was 100% in favour of keeping it natural and pollinator-friendly so much so that we may add bee hives in the spring!

As the first new cemetery to open in the Lower Mainland in over 50 years, it's been a challenge to rezone and develop the property. While it may have been easier to build condos, we know we've created something meaningful and lasting. If you share our vision, or want to learn more, get in touch with us. <

Trevor Crean is VP of Operations at Heritage Gardens Cemetery. heritagegardenscemetery.com, info@hgcemetery.com, 604-538-0074.

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Mac McLaughlin

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StarWise

October 2018

What are we after? What are we here for? What's it all about? According to the true mystics, we come from bliss, and in one form or another, we continually seek bliss, from the womb to the tomb. Certainly, the new born babe is blissed-out suckling at its mothers breast. We're blissed out when we're in love. We're right over the Moon with it all. The new job, new house, new car, new shoes etc, can send us on that joyous ride of bliss and happiness. But, of course, we know all these forms of bliss never last long and oftentimes we're flung off our high horse and land with a heavy thud, face-first into the muck. Once again, we arise, brush off the dirt and go for round two, three or four, only to find the same sad ending of old age, infirmity, degradation, impoverishment and other forms of humiliation.

Ultimately, we get out of here when we leave the mortal coil, with a long, lengthy trail of accumulated karma that we add to the enormous stockpile we have amassed throughout countless lifetimes, with no apparent way out of this very confusing spider's web of fate, spun by our own actions ad infinitum. What to do, you might ask? First, let's get down to what is really wrong. Mainly, we're seeking bliss in all the wrong places and placing too much importance on transient baubles that we consider to be valuable. Don't get me wrong. It's okay to seek a good life and all of us would love to live as comfortably as possible. Not a bad a thing. What is truly wrong is that we will go to no end to accumulate materialistic treasures, but continually ignore our spiritual needs.

As my beloved Sat Guru, Param Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj would say, "We feed the horse, but starve the rider." When the 14th century Saint Kabir stepped onto the Earth, he realized no one was happy, including the kings, queens and on down the line. The key and secret to it all is that we are not nurturing our spirit and no amount of money, fame, name or power will help to alleviate the hollowness and emptiness that is the result of all our efforts to attain happiness. Me, I'm just a lowly parrot, parroting the words of my great guru. He gave us a way out and a resolution to it all. It was to find a competent guru, meditate daily, live non-violently and give love and respect to all of God's creatures.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109.

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ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19

When the Sun moves through Aries, you're in your solar high of the year. When the Sun moves through Libra, it's your solar low time and you may be lacking energy. Accommodate this by taking it easy, taking a vacation and basically taking care of yourself. Energy picks up at the end of the month.



TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21

It's time to get your ducks in a row. It's also time to find a new row and possibly a new way of life. Things are changing and you cannot stop it, but you can dance with it and make creative changes. The full Moon on October 24 will illuminate which way to go.



GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20

The new Moon on October 8 lights up your solar fifth house representing new enterprises, children, romance and entertainment. Two other areas of importance are health and finances, which you should not ignore. Your instincts will be high regarding just what to do. Take the days as they come and do one thing at a time.



CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22

Home, family, land and real estate are strong topics this month. A probable move is in store. You may be strongly moved by a new romantic energy that is manifesting now. A special child is born and the child may be a symbolic new ideal or a series of innovative ideas that are very exciting.



LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22

Although we're moving into the cooler fall season, you may find that all kinds of things are heating up in your life. The relationship area could become an arena in which jousts and bouts take place. Romantic energies are hot and so are their complications. Creative energy is strong, real estate opportunities manifest, health needs attention.



VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22

Two areas of your solar chart are strongly activated. The first one is your money house. You can expect that resources will increase throughout October. Values deepen and you become even more determined to make things work. Watch for overworking. The other area is that of creativity, music and the arts. Maybe you will be creative about making money.



LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22

It's your time to shine. The Libra new Moon on October 8 signals a new start. Recent news should give some hints regarding the direction to go in. Your money area is well lit up by Venus and Jupiter bringing opportunities for self betterment in all kinds of ways. Strive for harmony now.



SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21

You've won the astro lottery with lovely Venus and abundant Jupiter visiting your sign. The main key is to truly utilize this special energy by moving towards whatever brings you contentment and happiness. Love and creative energies are manifesting now. Don't waste this valuable time on frivolous activity. Make hay while the sun shines.



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21

If you put your ear to the rail, you'll hear the train coming. We used to do that when we were kids and it was always exciting when the train showed up. Soon, your train will be arriving in the form of Lord Jupiter spending a year in Sagittarius starting next month. Start planning, scheming and dreaming.



CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19

It's a special time in your life, well sort of. Most people start squirming when Saturn pays a visit, as generally he's not much fun. But for Cappy, Saturn is like daddy coming home. He brings what you need, not what you want. He provides and protects and cares for you in a deep way.



AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19

It's time to head out for destinations unknown, or known and fantasized about. Travel is indicated and so is everything to do with education and spiritual liberation. Your career house is rocking as well. Maybe the travel will be career related. Whatever the case, get a move on and seek your destiny.



PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20

Life's meanings deepen and wisdom garnered through these times will last for the rest of your days. Venus and Jupiter are casting good energy into your sign and will help guide you in the right direction. Have faith and know that the lord's strong and long arm is guiding you along the way. Creative energy is at a peak. <



Copyright trivia

Let's say you want to dress up as Thor for Halloween. Is making your own costume a copyright violation?

Halloween is upon us and just like every other year, people from all ages will be out trick or treating dressed as their favourite thing or character. While there are some classics – ghosts, vampires, witches and punny ones like “cereal” killers – many of us draw directly from popular culture and that means drawing directly from copyrighted characters.

Just as a curiosity, do you think you'd be slapped with a copyright violation notice if you were to reproduce one of these characters' likeness?

It might sound far-fetched, but in the US in 2011, a Halloween costume manufacturer by the name of Underdog Endeavors Inc. was sued by SCG Power Rangers, LLC for the production of Power Ranger costumes. Eventually, the two parties settled, with the costume manufacturer giving up the profits obtained from the costume sales. And this case has definitely not been the only one of its kind.

In Canada, costume designs are considered to be under copyright. So mass producing a costume such as Marvel's Thor, for example, without clearing the rights to use the character might not be the best idea. The Copyright Act does contain copyright exceptions for articles that have a “utilitarian function,” like clothing, but there are elements in a costume that might go beyond the clothing function, like Thor's hammer.

The key part here is that if you are making the

costume for your own personal use, you should be ok, as you would likely fall under the “reproduction for private purposes” exception of the Copyright Act. The cases mentioned above likely infringed copyright laws due to the fact that these companies were manufacturing costumes to sell to others without having the rights to reproduce the likeness of the characters, which is a different case from the DIY Halloween garbs we are talking about here.

So, again, crafting your own costume, even if it is emulating a copyrighted character, is protected by the Copyright Act. And this might sound obvious, but it is one of those provisions we take for granted. Remember the law can change at any time. In fact, right now, the government of Canada is running a consultation to decide on the future of copyright and lobbyists are all too eager to tip the rules in their favour.

Let's not take the exceptions that allow us to create and craft for granted. Canada has some of the strongest and more progressive copyright laws in the world so let's make sure we keep them that way. You can have your say at letstalkcopyright.ca

In the meantime, craft away!

A special thank you to the folks at CIPPIC for reviewing and providing their expertise on the accuracy of the legal-side of this copyright trivia. <

Mariana Ramos Capelo is a design specialist in the communications team for OpenMedia, a non-profit organization that works to keep the internet open, affordable and surveillance-free. openmedia.org

...Civic elections from pg. 4

Stewart and Shauna Sylvester are either from or surrounded by the forces that brought in Vision. With the further support of One City, this same crowd would have the numbers to continue dominating the city.

The one shining light on council has been Adriane Carr of the Vancouver Greens, who topped the polls in the last election. She has supported genuine citizen involvement and sustainable options that would retain character buildings while allowing for more affordable options for growth. This is where we need to go.

And although the Greens are not running a majority nor a mayoralty candidate, they have a quality team of four for council, and three each for Park Board and School Board. We need them all elected.

The big question is who will also work for a change in direction. There are many options, perhaps too many. And although many are good people, will any get elected in such a split broad field. When the public are confused, they tend to go with familiar names.

Oddly enough, the NPA, who used to be the developers' party, have a predominately new slate with only one incumbent. Hector Bremner was elected in last fall's by-election with the NPA. However, he has since shown his stripes and was prevented from running with the NPA because he is in a conflict of interest as a lobbyist for the development industry.

New NPA candidate for councillor, Colleen Hardwick, is personally challenging the current city directions for a rethink. She is one of the few candidates, speaking for herself and not for the party, who is questioning the assumed wisdom of the Broadway subway due to high implementation costs and speculative impacts from related tower nodal development on affordability. This subway is not a done deal yet.

There are many options to choose from this election year. Choose carefully and wisely. We will be living with this for the next four years. <

Elizabeth Murphy is a private sector project manager and was formerly a Property Development Officer for the City of Vancouver's Housing & Properties Department and for BC Housing. info@elizabethmurphy.ca



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A deep state of confusion

by Geoff Olson

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less."

– Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*

On November 3, 1996, a black Mercedes crashed into a truck at the gates of Susurluk, a village in Turkey. Three of the four on board died in the crash. One was a Mafia boss involved in heroin trafficking and member of a right-wing ultranationalist group, and one was the head of Istanbul's police academy. The survivor was a Turkish member of parliament.



Former Canadian diplomat and Berkeley history professor Peter Dale Scott drew upon the English translation of *derin devlet* to describe the ability of unelected officials to deceive, deform, and disable democratic mechanisms in the US. These figures hail from the military-industrial complex, the national security apparatus, Wall Street, big banks, big oil and corporate-funded think tanks.

The finding of such individuals in surprisingly close, if fatal, association gave the Turkish people a peek into a largely hidden world. They coined the term *derin devlet* – “deep state” – to describe a nexus of politics, power, and international criminality.

Since 1996, the term “deep state” has gone from an obscure Turkish term to an academic footnote to locker room wiffle ball. And with the election of Donald J. Trump, the term has been deformed by alternate interpretations and weaponized for partisan purposes. “Dumptyized,” in effect. In a time of social media silos and 30-second attention spans, where every bias is only a click away from confirmation, it would help to go back to those who first popularized the term.

In 2000, former Canadian diplomat and Berkeley

history professor Peter Dale Scott drew upon the English translation of *derin devlet* to describe the ability of unelected officials to deceive, deform, and disable democratic mechanisms in the US. These figures hail from the military-industrial complex, the national security apparatus, Wall Street, big banks, big oil and corporate-funded think tanks. They operate largely outside of electoral systems and use their influence, legally and illegally, to exert influence on the political and communications world.

In his book, *The Deep State*, author Mike Lofgren offers the image of a mostly submerged iceberg, “which operates according to its own compass heading regardless of who is formally in power,” carrying along the visible tip of the iceberg, where the electoral entertainments of democracy play out.

Scott offered an alternative formulation: “It is not a structure, but a system, as difficult to define, but also as real and powerful, as a weather system,” he wrote in his 2016 book, *The American Deep State: Wall Street, Big Oil, and the Attack on U.S. Democracy*.

(A cosmic analogy may be even better: the deep state behaves like “dark matter,” which pulls galactic masses in directions that are incomprehensible without accounting for its invisible influence.)

The deep state rises to the surface in historically transitional moments, when the surface level of politics and media must be tugged in a new direction. These involve three levels of interference, in Scott's formulation:

1. Low level deep events, such as the falsification of documents in political campaigns, which are not revealed or understood until years later. 2. Mid-level deep events, sometimes involving the compliance of commercially controlled media to misrepresent political assassinations and other crimes. 3. Structural deep events, conceived with long-term goals in mind and historical alteration of society as a whole.

The 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dealey Plaza was emblematic of the 2nd level of deep event, according to the Berkeley prof. So what of the current US president? Is he another JFK confronting the deep state, as some insist? The anonymous author of the infamous *New York Times* op-ed describes efforts by White House staffers to subvert presidential directives. This does sound awfully deep-state-ish. In fact, the unidentified author describes himself or herself as representative of the “steady state” - unelected, unnamed figures defending democracy from an elected leader.

The truth, as is usually the case, is likely more complex – perhaps fractally so. Trump gave the Pentagon its greatest budget increase in history. He also signed off on a record-breaking tax cut for the nation's wealthiest, while gutting corporate regulations. He seems less the sworn enemy of the deep state than its greatest friend.

We're through the looking-glass now: to the followers of Fox News, Breitbart, and other alt-right outlets, the deep state denotes Obama's “government in exile,”

which is committed to save the swamp from Trump's brave efforts at drainage. Meanwhile, to followers of Rachel Maddow, Bill Maher, and the proper portals of progressive thought, “deep state” is a crankish conspiracy term peddled by paranoid fools from the right.

One side has hammered “deep state” into a pair of cartoonish calipers for measuring occulted power. The other side is convinced the users of this twisted tool might as well be out to measure the Cheshire Cat's grin. Both are off by a wide margin.


Complicating matters is the financing of Trump's real estate projects by elements from Russian organized crime. In a 2017 article for *WhoWhatWhy*, Scott concluded that Trump represents a historically new entity: an avatar of the “supranational milieu,” composed by a global elite of the very wealthiest, including corporate/criminal interests in both the United States and Russia.

This notion of a supranational deep state does not seem to be far-fetched to me, though I remain agnostic about rumours involving the Offal Office. I certainly don't buy the alt-right notion that Trump is playing “four-dimensional chess” against the deep state. The six-time bankruptee would probably lose at checkers to a nine-year old and tweet that he whipped Garry Kasparov.

As a journalist, I've heard long tales of networks of influence that suborn democracy at everything from the civic to federal level. Some years back, a former BC cabinet minister suggested I check out past episodes of *Yes Minister*, a BBC comedy series. The show featured a well-meaning, but hapless, politician whose trial balloons were regularly popped by his sly, serpentine advisor. The ex-politician said it was the best portrayal of how politics actually works at the legislative level.

“They give you about six months,” he said of his *Yes Minister*-like experiences in office. “Six months for what?” I asked. “Until they decide whether you're going to succeed or not,” he replied. Unelected bureaucrats in Victoria would choose to either cooperate with government initiatives or not, he added.

In Washington, unelected government officials have been described as “weebees,” meaning “we be here when you get in, and we be here when you leave.” In rotation between public and private service, these figures outlive political campaigns and outsmart electoral oversight. They are, in effect, the Mandarin class protecting the wants of a very few from the needs of the very many.

Perhaps it's not such long way from a 1996 car crash in Susurluk to the current train wreck by the Potomac. In any case, it's enough to leave anyone in a deep state of confusion. 

mwiseguise@yahoo.com



Learning to trust in Safaga

by Nadia Serry

In 1991, Menaville Resort medical staff participated in a series of national and international medical research studies. The huge efforts spent to scientifically implement the phenomena of the non-invasive, drug-free, climato-therapy on patients of autoimmune related conditions resulted in unprecedented achievements. Menaville Safaga is not simply a medical centre; it is a fully-equipped four-star resort with everything a traveller would aspire to have in order to enjoy a vacation by the seaside. In addition, it is a four-hour drive from Luxor city, an area with one-third of the world's historical monuments.

I have an enduring passion for the ever evolving field of wellness research. I also have a new passion – health tourism – which led me to the Menaville Resort in Safaga, a hidden jewel by the magical shores of the Red Sea in Egypt. Since my first visit, I now return every year.

For health and wellness seekers, a dream holiday would combine health benefits, relaxation, sun, seaside, good food, water activities, excursions and an extremely friendly, warm staff. The Menaville Resort fulfills all of these dream vacation requirements. And despite the beautiful simplicity of the resort, the benefits to one's body, mind, heart and soul reaped from staying in this hidden paradise cannot be adequately expressed.

My primary reason for choosing the Menaville Resort was to experience the benefits of climate therapy. I never thought the unique environment would become a dear, precious friend who would lead me on a journey of deep healing that would set my soul free. In the embrace of the warm, loving Red Sea, I was gifted with many freeing moments of enlightenment. Let me share one with you.

They say that experiencing something new is good for brain health. What I experienced greatly transcends that sentiment. One particular day, an agent booking sea excursions approached me to join a group to snorkel around the beautiful reefs. When he noticed my reluctance, he mentioned visiting the island of Toubia. With

its white sand and breathtaking emerald water, it all sounded attractive – except for the snorkelling part. I had never felt safe enough to join any water activities beyond swimming. Part of me wanted to do something new and to challenge my old fears while part of me remained hesitant. I made an agreement with him that I would first have a lesson in shallow water. I was determined to overcome my fear.

I was joyfully surprised to see all kinds of fish, sea urchins, sea sponge, coloured seaweeds and corals of different colours. My teacher was patient, calm and confident, which is my type of teacher. He made me realize how tense I was and through him I learned that the more I relaxed and the less I moved, the better my snorkelling experience would be.



I remembered my guide's words about our miraculous potential to embrace and contain worlds in our hearts.

This is similar to an attitude common in martial arts. Less action and more poise and calm will get us further ahead in whatever we seek and do. I realized that trusting both the sea and myself put me into a state of deep relaxation, calm and peace, a state that no therapy had allowed my body to achieve since my car accident four years ago. How freeing. What a joy!

Sometimes, trusting what the inner self wants to do renders delightful results – results that are sweetly and deeply felt and which create positive ripple effects on different levels and in many directions.

What had began as a snorkelling trip ended as a spiritual experience. Years ago, my spiritual guide, who

passed on four years ago, told us how to identify our spiritual guide: when we feel we can trust, when we feel our hearts expand with comfort and calm, when we become full with enthusiasm and hope, when we lose track of time, we know the person talking to us is our true guide.

That experience also taught me it was important to let go in order to grow, to expand and to fly free. And it made me realize why it is important for the seeker to let go of the guide when the time comes. As much as it is difficult, it must be accepted. Otherwise, the following learning stage will not unfold or manifest. Growing wings comes with a price!

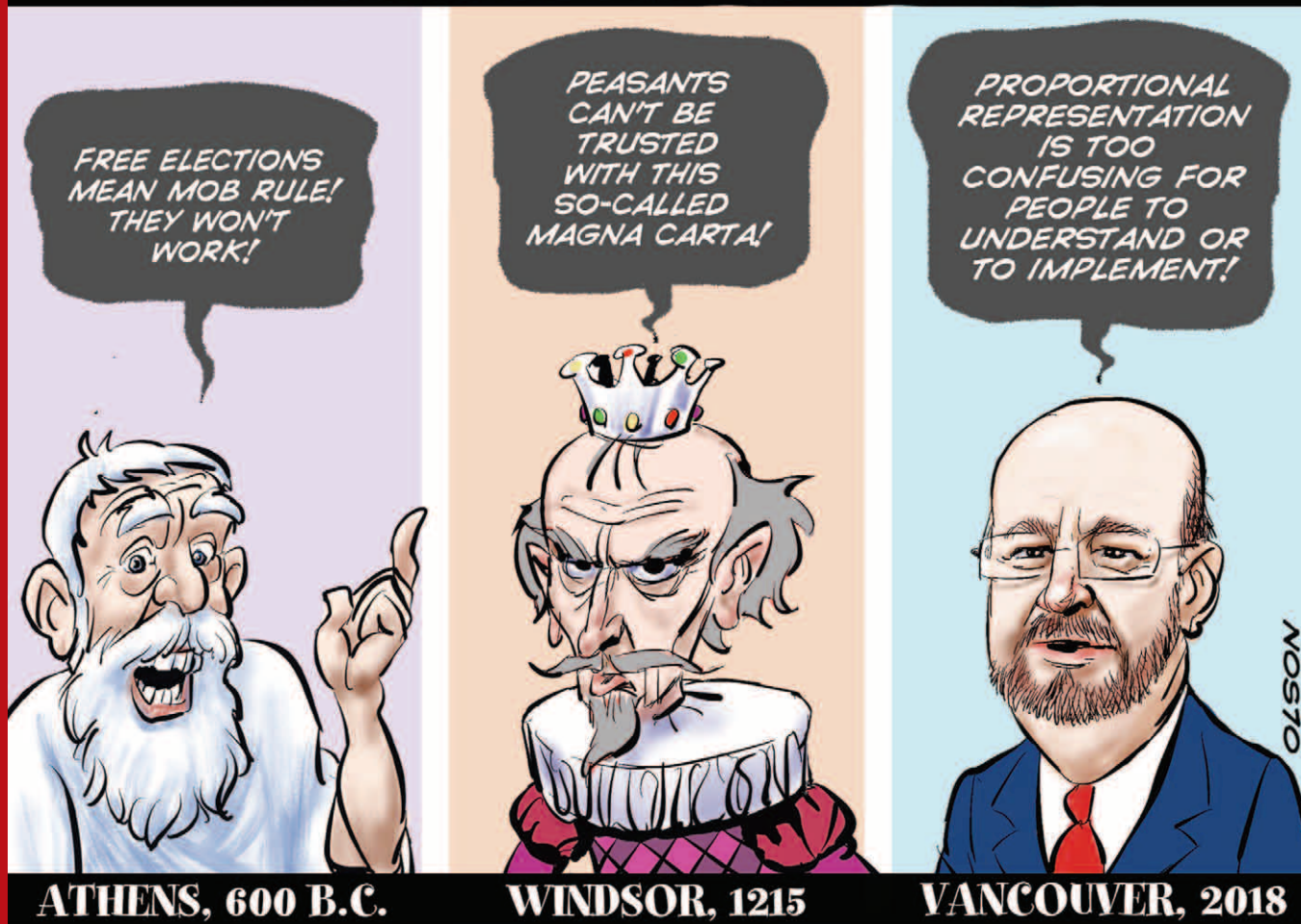
In the warm, kind water of the Red Sea, I realized I was avoiding letting go of my spiritual guide because it meant experiencing the painful separation. For me, this was scary, confusing and upsetting. Yet it is through trusting in letting go that we reach another stage of freedom and spiritual maturity.

My visit came to an end and I was leaving the resort with a heavy heart, already nostalgic for this healing paradise. Then I remembered what my spiritual guide told us one day while he was talking about the divine realm that exists in the heart of a human. He said, "The heart of a human being contains the whole universe."

That day, while looking at the Red Sea, I meditated on the divine secrets hidden in that declaration. I was comforted when I remembered my guide's words about our miraculous potential to embrace and contain worlds in our hearts. I knew I could leave that place, but at the same time, keep it in my heart. I could recall the sea when I needed to and enjoy its magical, tender, healing power. I could visualize each cell in my body bathing in it. The awesome sea would soothe my mind and comfort my heart. At any time, I could recall this special place and the warm and genuine staff that made me feel I have a home away from home.

Nadia Serry is a registered clinical counsellor and a Sufi spiritual teacher. She lives in Vancouver. For more information, email ngserry18@gmail.com

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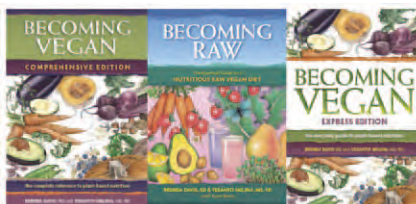
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Science Matters David Suzuki

ENVIRONMENT

We must heed storm warnings

In 2012, North Carolina's Coastal Resources Commission warned that sea levels there could rise by a metre over the next century. The warning was based in part on US Geological Survey findings that "sea level rise along the portion of the East Coast between North Carolina and Massachusetts is accelerating at three to four times the global rate" and that sea level in the region "would rise up to 11.4 inches higher than the global average rise by the end of the 21st century," according to ABC News.

It was meant to help the state prepare its long, wide, low-lying coast for the kinds of severe occurrences that are becoming increasingly common as climate change ramps up. But developers and others complained the forecasts could hurt property values and increase insurance costs.

Politicians came up with a novel "solution." They passed a law banning policies based on the forecasts.

Under the law, predictions can be for 30 years at most and must be based on historical data about sea level rise. This ignores mountains of scientific evidence about global warming and its consequences, including the fact that sea level rise is accelerating as ever-increasing greenhouse gas emissions drive global average temperatures higher.

The law allowed developers and government to continue building homes, buildings, roads and bridges

along the coast, oblivious to threats outlined by people who study climate and oceans.

As meteorologist Eric Holthaus explains in the *Washington Post*, "A warmer atmosphere can hold more water vapour, producing heavier downpours and providing more energy to hurricanes, boosting their destructive potential."

Developers and others complained the forecasts could hurt property values and increase insurance costs.

Employing solutions while continuing to develop new knowledge and technologies in everything from agriculture to renewable energy would create good jobs and economic gains, while protecting human health and well-being and the very life-support systems that keep us alive and well. Many in the US understand this. While the federal government rolls back environmental laws and protections, "more than 3,000 US cities, states, businesses, investors, counties, regional associations, faith communities and post-secondary institutions are on track to reduce the country's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 17%, and possibly by as much as 24%

[by 2025], bringing the country close to meeting its promised target under the Paris Agreement," an *Energy Mix* article states.

Those reductions depend on how well signatories to Bloomberg Philanthropies' America's Pledge keep their commitments on a range of goals regarding renewable energy, energy efficiency, electric vehicles, carbon pricing, carbon sequestration strategies and preventing methane leaks.

A study by C40 Cities, the Global Covenant of Mayors and the NewClimate Institute concluded, "Cities around the world could create 13.7 million jobs and prevent 1.3 million premature deaths per year by 2030 by pursuing 'ambitious urban climate policies' that 'vastly reduce carbon emissions globally,'" *Energy Mix* reports.

As our thoughts and hopes are with the people of the US East Coast, the Philippines and other places caught in terrifying weather, we must remember we're all in the storm now. Our way to safety is also our way to a brighter future. ☒

Excerpted from the original article. **David Suzuki** is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Written with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation senior editor Ian Hanington. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

Now is your chance

by Antony Hodgson

Why you need to vote for Proportional Representation

Between October 22 and November 2, British Columbians will receive a ballot package in the mail from Elections BC asking us if we want to change from our outdated voting system to a new way of voting called Proportional Representation (or ProRep). ProRep will make all of our votes count by ensuring that our legislature will accurately reflect how we vote; if a party's candidates win 40% of the vote, that party will end up with 40% of the seats.

There are many excellent reasons why you might want to vote for this change to ProRep.

If you've ever felt it's unfair that a party with under 40% support can seize the reins of executive and legislative power and start doing whatever they want without regard to the 60+% of voters who oppose their actions, then now is your chance.

If you're worried that people with deep disdain for democracy can come to power without anything close to true majority support and run roughshod over our core democratic institutions, as Doug Ford has recently been doing to our Charter in Ontario and as Donald Trump has been doing down south, then now is your chance.

If you've ever felt you would be throwing your vote away if you voted for your true top choice, and instead ended up holding your nose and voting for a person or party just to stop someone you truly feared from getting in, then now is your chance.

If you live in one of the 60 or so ridings in BC which are so safe for one party that, in Rafe Mair's inimitable words, "a fencepost with hair" could win if it had the right party label, then now is your chance.

If you're tired of seeing whole regions of the province swept by one party or another, leaving some areas entirely without representation in government, and if you're frustrated that you don't hear MLAs from different party backgrounds actively debating the most pressing issues in your region, then now is your chance.

If instead of the same old tired, divisive, polarizing politics and partisan bickering, you think BC would be a better place if we used a new way of voting that included a wider range of voices, that empowered MLAs to represent your areas' issues to Victoria instead of the other way around, and that encouraged MLAs to cooperate across party lines, then now is your chance.

If you want us to vote in a way that has helped eight OECD countries to overtake Canada in the UN Human Development Index over the past 25 years, then now is your chance.

If you want us to choose a way of voting that makes young people enthusiastic about voting, then now is your chance.

And if you want BC to be the leader in showing North America how a more inclusive approach to democracy can make our society better in just about every way imaginable, then now is your chance.

As the famous political scientist Arend Lijphart said, "The overall performance record of the democracies [that use proportional representation] is clearly superior to that of the [winner-take-all] democracies, and contrary to the conventional wisdom, there is no trade-off at all between governing effectiveness and high-quality democracy."

Who is opposing ProRep?

The official opponent, the No BC Proportional Representation Society, is a triumvirate of political insiders: Suzanne Anton, a former Liberal cabinet minister, Bill Tieleman, a former NDP strategist and Bob Plecas, a retired senior civil servant. As Press Progress recently reported (<https://bit.ly/2R5fO4t>), the opposition to ProRep is largely funded by BC's wealthiest people and our province's entrenched power brokers. Some of the major donors to date include a mining tycoon, a venture capitalist, the billionaire founder of Future Shop, a corporate lobbyist, several developers and realtors, and six separate members of the Rogers dynasty. And a lumber tycoon apparently personally funded front page ads on newspapers across BC prior to the official start of the campaign.

Opponents are pulling out all the stops. They have no qualms about resorting to misinformation and flat out lies. Some of these are almost laughable; the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association used a horror show theme to try to scare us about the fact that Australia's government caucus recently forced the prime minister to step down, suggesting that this is our fate if we adopt ProRep, despite the fact that Australia doesn't even use ProRep for its lower house.

But some of their activities are more sinister. Opponents are being investigated by Elections BC for running illegal ads (<https://bit.ly/2OnpR6f>). And BCTV Kootenays recently reported that a new Fact Checker website was apparently subjected to a cyberattack within two days of its launch: (<https://bit.ly/2R3pkVw>)

Why are these supporters of the status quo going to such lengths to block this change to a more democratic and inclusive voting system? Simply because the current system works so well for them. Most seasoned politicians know this. In 2009, before she became premier, Christy Clark made an eloquent plea to end first-past-the-post voting, saying, "Our current system served my personal political interests as a politician very well, thank you very much. I see many people whose interests, and in many cases whose income, is dependent on keeping our system the way it is." (<https://bit.ly/2Q2fp13>)

So she urged voters to support ProRep, saying, "If the established interests succeed in defeating this, they won't give you another chance. I hope British Columbians take this chance for real change." However, once politicians taste power, they change their tune, as Prime Minister Trudeau famously did a couple of years ago in cancelling the federal reform process. In Clark's case, when reminded of her 2009 recording, she categorically denied it, saying, "I have never supported [proportional representation]".

So with all these entrenched and vested interests opposed to voting reform, we have to do everything in our power to make our voices heard. And the most important way to do that is to vote for ProRep on the first *continued pg 23 ...*

What you can do to make this happen

For this change to a more positive and inclusive politics to actually happen, you need to do something very important. When Elections BC sends you your ballot package later this month, you need to vote for ProRep and send your ballot in, as soon as possible, and then invite and encourage all your friends and family to do the same.

Why is this important?

The defenders of the status quo are determined to block change. There are people in this province with strong vested interests in the current disproportional and dysfunctional voting system who don't want voting reform to succeed, and they're working very hard to make sure this referendum campaign does not succeed.

When and how do I vote?

Elections BC will be mailing out the ballots starting on October 22, just after the municipal elections. Ballots must be RECEIVED by Elections BC by November 30 so please be sure to mail yours back well in advance to be sure it will count. The first thing to do is to make sure you're registered to vote and that Elections BC has your current mailing information. You can update your information at <https://elections.bc.ca/register-to-vote>. If you're going to be out of town during the referendum, Elections BC can send your ballot to an address of your choice.

What are the questions on the ballot?

There will be two questions on the ballot. The first one simply asks if you would like to change to a proportional voting system. We strongly recommend you vote for ProRep on the first question. The second question asks for you to rank your preferences regarding three proportional voting system options that the Attorney General has identified as being suitable for use in British Columbia.

All three options are based on previous electoral reform processes and all would be excellent choices for BC. All would deliver strong proportionality, no region would lose any MLAs and voters would be able to vote for individual candidates.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All three proportional representation ballot options are fairer and more proportional than the current First Past the Post system. It is time to improve our democracy.

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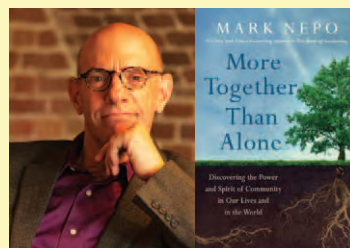
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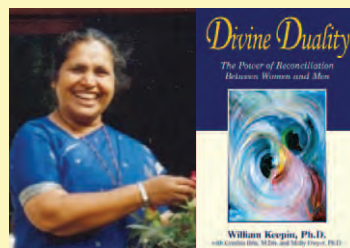


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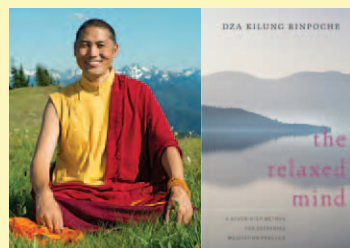
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...Now is your chance from pg. 20

question on the ballot.

Which systems should you choose on the second question? It's really up to you. All are solid choices.

You might prefer rural urban if you want the system that is closest to what the BC Citizens' Assembly recommended.

You might prefer mixed member if you want to keep having single member ridings, but also want to elect some MLAs at a regional level to provide a wider range of voices in your region.

Or you might prefer dual member if you like the mixed member model, but want to be sure that one of the regional MLAs comes from your part of the region.

Whatever you choose, each of them will strengthen our democracy and put people ahead of the power brokers who have had undue influence on our government for far too long. And each of them will ensure that the proportion of seats a party gets will equal the proportion of the vote their candidates receive in an election, all across the province.

Time to seize the opportunity

This fall's referendum gives us an amazing chance to vote for a better way of electing our government. By voting for ProRep on the first question, we can get rid of our tired status quo system. And with the second question, you can also help choose the kind of ProRep we get.

If you're hesitating at all about how to vote in this referendum, it may also help to know that we also get a 'money back' guarantee. The government has promised that after we've tried ProRep twice, we'll have another referendum to either confirm the change or switch back if things aren't working out, though no jurisdiction that's moved to ProRep has ever gone back. We really have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

ProRep will be a new way of voting that we are confident will work better for you. Make your vote count – in every election. Vote for ProRep and enjoy getting what you vote for. **K**

Antony Hodgson is President of Fair Voting BC and of Vote PR BC – the official proponent in this fall's referendum. He has been advocating for electoral reform since the original BC Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform back in 2004. In his day job, he is a professor of biomedical engineering at UBC.

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A brighter future.

OCT. 20
VOTE
4 COUNCIL
3 PARKS
3 SCHOOLS

A city hall that works for you.
A Vancouver that provides affordable homes.
A compassionate, safe and livable city.
A strong, sustainable local economy.
A genuinely green city.

Vancouver is at a crossroads. The era of big money is drawing to a close as people realize the corrupting influence it has had on our city. Over a decade of one party governance on council has increased a desire for change.

The Green Party has emerged as a strong alternative to the status quo. Our leadership on the park board has had a measurable impact on the operations of parks, and our school board caucus has worked hard to rebuild relationships at the Board of Education. Councillor Carr has been a powerful voice at city hall, raising questions and issues ignored by the other parties.

After more than a decade of building, developing, and strengthening the party, the Greens are a force to be reckoned in Vancouver. Other parties regularly adopt our ideas as their own, and politics reflect green ideals and principles like never before.

Today Vancouver Greens run exceptional candidates, campaign on principled, evidence-based ideas, and have a skilled and talented team of organizers behind us.

This is an election where all ten candidates can be elected in a breakthrough that would reshape politics across our city. This is our opportunity. Voters inspired by our message can cast their ballot for more than just change today, but for a brighter future.



JOIN THE MOVEMENT!
VOLUNTEER, DONATE, FIND OUT MORE:
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Authorized by John Whistler, Financial Agent 604-689-9200

votegreens.ca ELECT
CITY COUNCIL

green
PARTY OF VANCOUVER

Your Greens will champion a Vancouver that is truly affordable and liveable for all. We will ensure that city hall works for you, and is accountable, transparent, and fair. We will put public interest first. We are committed to a strong sustainable economy, engaged and happy communities, and meaningful reconciliation. We will provide climate leadership for a genuinely green city.



ADRIANE CARR

CITY COUNCILLOR (INCUMBENT), GREEN PARTY FOUNDER
@AdrianeCarr AdrianeCarrVancouver



PETE FRY

COMMUNICATIONS DESIGNER, COMMUNITY ADVOCATE
@PtFry PeteFryForVancouver petefry.ca



MICHAEL WIEBE

PARK BOARD COMMISSIONER, RESTAURATEUR
@ParkBoardWiebe michaelwiebe.ca



DAVID WONG

ARCHITECT, AUTHOR, ECOLOGIST
@DavidHTWong @DavidHTWong

PARK BOARD ELECT

Your Greens will champion improved accessibility and community partnerships in all our parks and facilities. We are committed to healthy recreation and active transportation. We will prioritize sustainability, increase biodiversity, and continue the important work towards reconciliation. We believe parks are for everyone.



STUART MACKINNON

PARK BOARD COMMISSIONER (INCUMBENT), EDUCATOR
@BetterParks stuart4parks.ca



DAVE DEMERS

HORTICULTURIST, BUILDER
@DaveForParks davedemers.ca



CAMIL DUMONT

HORTICULTURIST, URBAN FARMER
@Inner_CityFarms

SCHOOL BOARD ELECT

Your Greens will champion fully funded public education. We will prioritize safe, inclusive, and sustainable schools. We are committed to reconciliation and respect for diversity. We know that schools are the hearts of our communities and will ensure good governance to foster student success. We serve our students.



JANET FRASER

SCHOOL TRUSTEE (INCUMBENT), SCIENTIST, PARENT
@JanetRFraser @JanetFraser4Vancouver



ESTRELLITA GONZALEZ

SCHOOL TRUSTEE (INCUMBENT), WELLNESS EDUCATOR, PARENT
@EstieMGonzalez @Estrellita4Schools



LOIS CHAN-PEDLEY

IT CONSULTANT, PARENT
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